South Side Bethlehem Master Plan

CITY OF BETHLEHEM

JUNE 2001

SASAKI

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Section One: Foundations

Section Two:
Creating a Plan for the South Side

Foundations

Model of the South Side study area.

Where?

The South Side Bethlehem Master Plan was begun in August 2000. It was an effort to work with the City and community to understand current uses and possibilities for future development in the district. The study area is approximately 90 acres, encompassing the Historical Conservation District at its core, and concentrated on two primary streets and several intersecting streets. The site is bounded by the 5 Points intersection, the historic railroad station, 2nd Street, Taylor Street, and Morton Streets, and the right-of-way for Norfolk Southern Railway bisects the site.

ADJACENT AREAS

New Street, looking south.

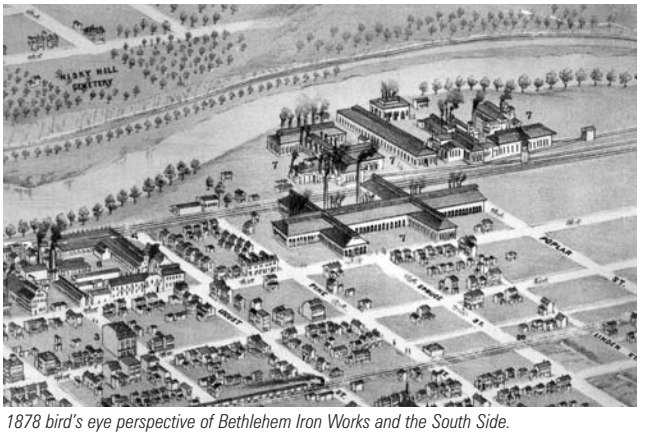
Several plans are also underway in areas adjacent to the study area. Lehigh University completed its Campus and Facilities Development Plan in September 2000, with several proposed projects planned in the first phase of implementation, including open space and athletic campus improvements, safety and circulation improvements and proposed renovation of academic buildings. One of the University's proposed improvements is a cluster of new residence halls, associated retail and parking adjacent to the South Side study district along Morton Street.

Backdrop of Bethlehem Works.

The redevelopment of Bethlehem Steel encompasses the old steel manufacturing plant that spans 2 sites: Bethlehem Works (approximately 163 acres) and Bethlehem Commerce Center (approximately 1600 acres) Currently, the Bethlehem Works plan shows the development of a series of museums and community entertainment venues. Access to the site will primarily be from the east; however, many visitors coming from the west will continue to use 3rd and 4th Streets.

Attributes of the South Side

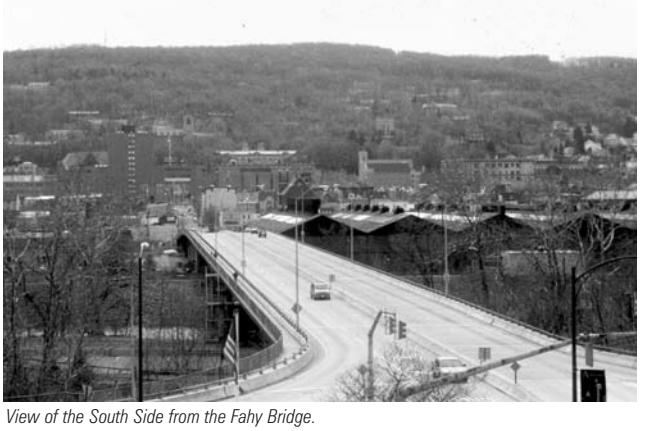
HISTORY



1878 bird's eye perspective of Bethlehem Iron Works and the South Side.

Bethlehem was settled in 1741 as a Moravian mission station on the northern banks of the Lehigh River. In 1847, Charles Luckenbach purchased 1,380 acres of the Moravian congregation's farm lands, including four farms that made up South Bethlehem and Fountain Hill. The four towns of Bethlehem, South Bethlehem, West Bethlehem, and Northampton Heights developed separately before incorporating in 1917.

TOPOGRAPHY



View of the South Side from the Fahy Bridge.

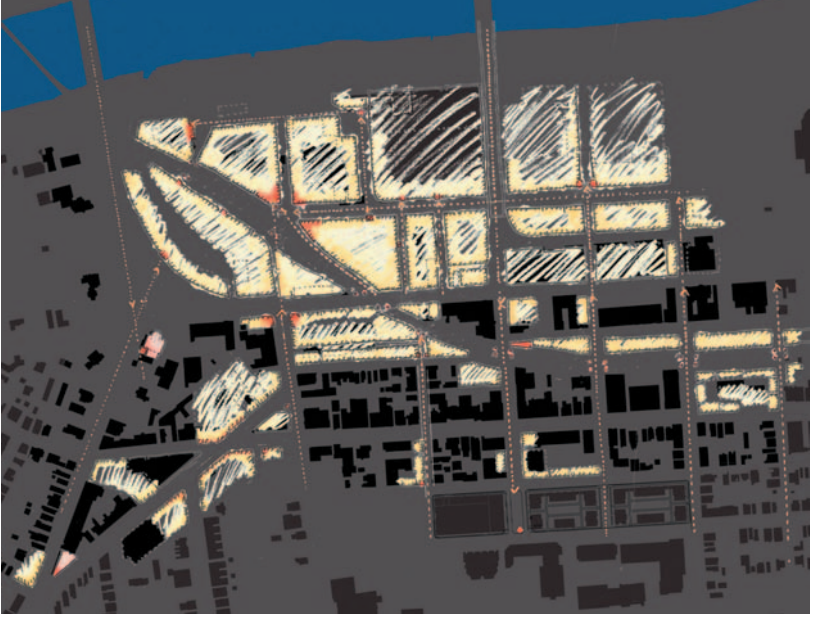
One of the strongest attractions of this district is the change in topography: from the South Mountain hill on the south to the river on the north. The north-south streets frame spectacular views: up to the hills, and down to the river. Today, the river is bracketed by flood walls, cutting off its visual presence from the lower elevations of the South Side, and is also lined with an active rail corridor. Reclaiming the river's edge is a challenge, but remains an important part of the South Side's heritage.

COMMUNITY

View from Wyandotte toward Montclaire and Carlton Street.

The combination of this land becoming available for development due to Luckenbach's purchase, the opening of the Lehigh Valley Railroad (1855) and the convergence with Northern Pennsylvania Railroad (1857) created the foundations for an industrial town. In 1860, the Bethlehem Iron Company (with roots in Lehigh Zinc and Bethlehem Iron, and changed to Bethlehem Steel Company in 1899) purchased land in South Bethlehem to begin steel production for iron rails. Over the next 135 years, this steel operation grew to employ nearly 165,000 people working in three eight-hour shifts. With the growth of the steel plant, and the founding of Lehigh University in 1866, came the growth of the South Side, primarily becoming a residential community for steel workers, students, and their families.

Today, the South Side maintains a strong historic identity, even with the dilution of the company town personality. It has strong residential communities of one-family and multi-family dwellings and row housing, and an eclectic mix of civic and commercial buildings: some built as landmarks over a century ago, and some new projects that were completed within the last five years. Mixed-use retail and civic districts occur on two primary east-west streets: 3rd and 4th, and on two primary north-south streets: New and Broadway. With the closing of the Bethlehem Steel plants in Bethlehem, the South Side has seen a downturn in the number of owner-occupied housing and businesses.



Map of the study area showing important building edges and key connections.

Intentions of the Plan

The master plan was realized through three phases of work: Site Reconnaissance, Alternative Futures, and the Development Plan. During the first months of the planning process—site reconnaissance—the design team walked the South Side neighborhoods, mapping the uses and identifying areas where future infill would strengthen the neighborhood. The team observed that this urban district was informal and has pockets that are neglected and forgotten. Long-time residents are now mixed with working families and a student population that lends to the eclectic, ethnic mix. The proportion of students, and the vitality that they bring, needs to be minded for appropriate proportion with permanent residents.

The purposes that guided this plan were five-fold:

1. **Create a thriving retail district,**
2. **Clarify future development opportunities for the downtown area,**
3. **Generate public and private interest in future investment,**
4. **Create a collaborative process with the City, Bethlehem Economic Development Corporation (BEDCO), and Boles Smyth, with input from Lehigh University,**
5. **Work with the City to develop policies that will help implement the plan.**

Looking at the Site

The diagrams on these pages illustrate our findings about significant buildings and land use, residential neighborhoods, open space and streets. These diagrams gave the planning team a foundation for understanding the consequences of development. These drawings, in combination with community discussions, field surveys, and site observations, formed the framework for the alternative futures and preferred plan phases of the master plan.

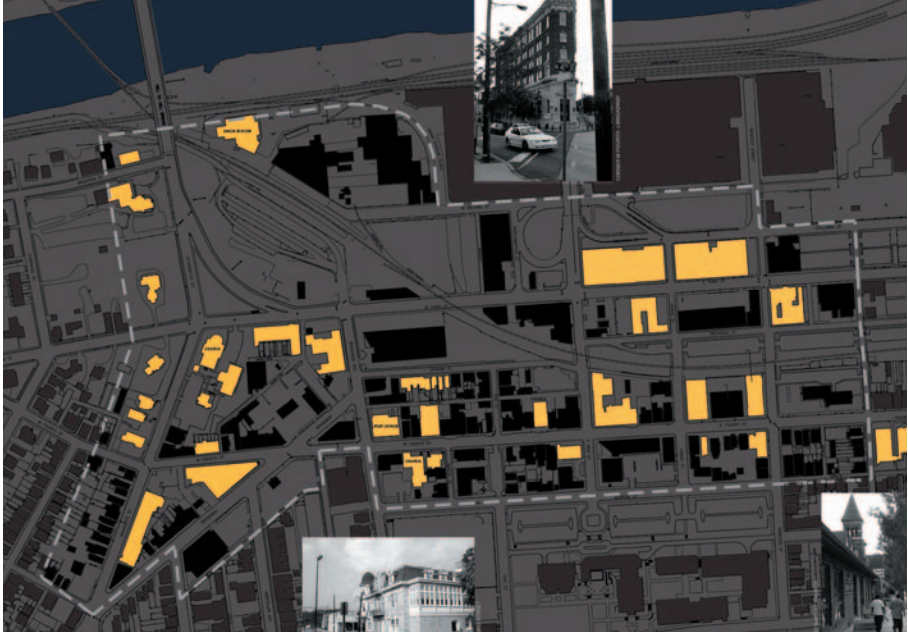


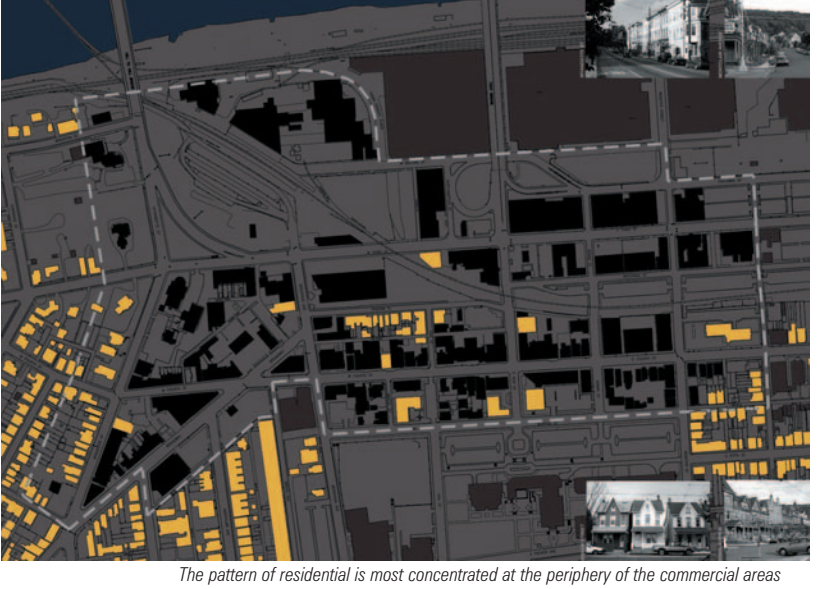
Diagram showing significant civic and historic buildings on the South Side.

Significant Buildings

The South Side is comprised of many buildings that architecturally or culturally make a positive contribution to the community. Buildings include schools, churches, community centers, and important civic buildings. These buildings vary in scale, from small historic houses along Graham Place and in neighborhood districts, to larger buildings like Lehigh River Port (formerly Johnson Machinery) in the research and development district. Primary civic buildings in the study area include churches, seminaries, libraries, schools, community centers, transportation centers (historic or current), post office, boys and girls club, and historic theater. We found that there was an appropriate dispersion of civic uses throughout the district with the exception of areas such as Wyandotte/ Broadway which have no civic buildings. There is also a strong representation of churches which suggests a network of religious communities within the district.

Clockwise: flatiron building on 4th and Broadway, the historic train station in the R&D district, and pattern of church and residential on 4th Street.

We also studied all primary first-floor retail. There is very little concentration of uses by type (i.e. restaurants, civic, office, etc.). Retail in this district appears excessively scattered, and does not achieve critical mass. Also, connections between Third and Fourth Streets are uninviting, as these side streets are largely neglected. Better concentration of retail uses would improve the district.



The pattern of residential is most concentrated at the periphery of the commercial areas with good opportunities for mixed-use along 3rd and 4th Streets in the future.

Residential

We have observed three primary housing areas within this district: east of Webster Street, west of Birkel Avenue, and west of Wyandotte Street. Housing is also located in upper stories of commercial and retail buildings. This type of mixed-use development which integrates housing with commercial and office space should be expanded as it will add vitality to the downtown district in the evening hours.

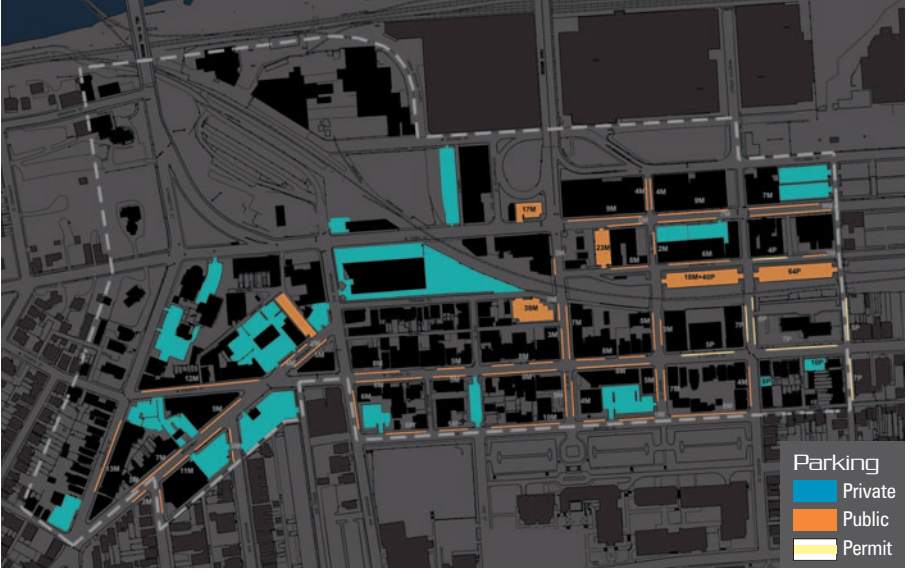
The abandoned rail corridor looking east.

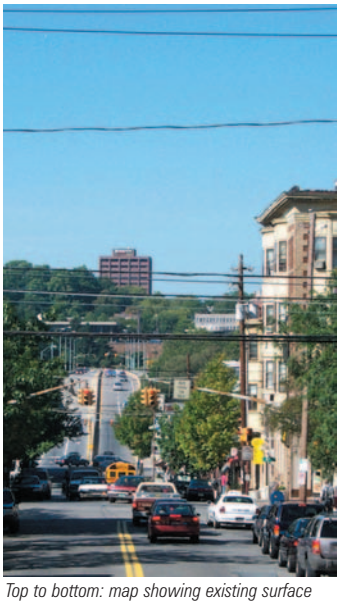
Top and bottom: the proposed linear park along the rail right-of-way will help connect the districts throughout the study area.

Open Space

The district is characterized by a 90 foot elevation change. The primary east-west roadways are generally sited on level terrain and more appropriate for wide storefront dimensions. North-south streets have steeper grades and may be better suited to small retail and residential. While many of these north-south streets provide dramatic views to the hills beyond, they appear neglected. Strong streetscape amenities such as trees, lighting and sidewalks, would encourage their use and accentuate the views to the south.

There is only modest investment in open space in the district. The small neighborhood parks are largely underutilized, and appear as "left over space" rather than vital, gathering areas. The only prominent green space is near Third Street and the Hill-to-Hill bridge. This space, however, is bisected by busy roadways. The master planning process identifies potential methods for connective street improvement and additional park space.





Top to bottom: map showing existing surface parking throughout the study area. These sites are good locations for future development; view along a side street in the study area; one of the main vehicular connectors in the district--New Street--looking north.

Streets

The study also focused on vehicular circulation, traffic lights and traffic flow (one-way versus two-way traffic) within the district. Where possible, roadways should return to two-way traffic. This reduces traffic speed making the district more pedestrian friendly, aiding retail success and assisting visitors in navigating the area. Presently, traffic congestion is manageable, even at the busiest intersections such as New Street/ Third Street and Third Street/Hill-to-Hill Bridge. During the master planning process we determined the range of parking need for different development densities.

Unfortunately, one of the first images of the districts is parking which lends the district a poor visual quality. The district has 9.6% of its land area devoted to parking. While parking is adequate for today's uses, new development would create parking demand. The master planning process identifies future parking areas, in shielded interior courtyards, parallel parking (up to 15% of total parking can be accommodated this way), and potential parking garages.

The team also assessed existing light fixtures and found that lighting is incomplete within the district. It is clear that 3rd and 4th Street have poor lighting; neighborhood parks are largely unlit as well. Presently, the height and spacing of lighting is oriented to car traffic rather than pedestrian traffic. Our assessment suggests that there might be different pedestrian lighting for each of the three districts: bohemian downtown, residential neighborhoods, and research and development/ warehouse. In addition, more outdoor social spaces may be encouraged with improved lighting.

Peer Examples

To better study the distribution of retail space, three neighborhoods around the Boston area were studied. Like the South Side, these neighborhoods have a college or university nearby, have a more bohemian feel, and have housing neighborhoods. (See Appendix)

Districts

After discussions with the neighborhoods and the City, several site visits, and using the five principles identified in "Intentions," the planning team identified four primary districts within the study area that would benefit from focussed improvements: These primary districts are:

R&D/Entertainment:
including the warehouse district, railroad station, and the Banana Factory.

West 3rd Street:
including the Perkins Site, rail line, vacant land near the Hill-to-Hill Bridge, and retail/hotel along west 3rd Street.

Flatiron neighborhood:
including Broadway and Wyandotte area, focussing especially on the large parking areas to the north of the Laneco market.

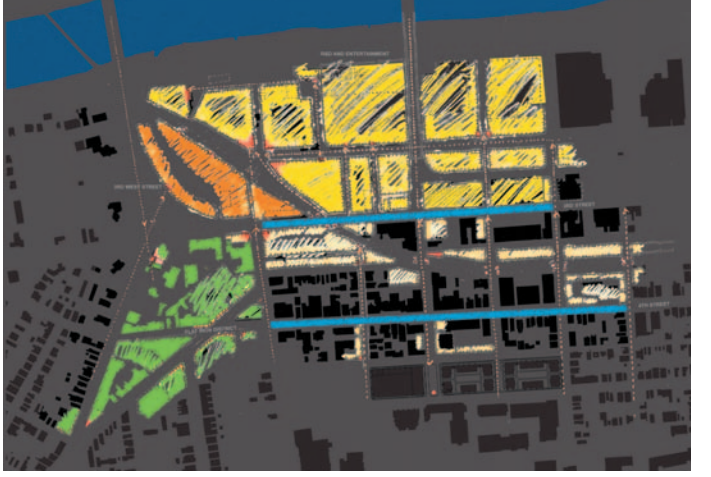
3rd & 4th Street Corridors:
concentrating on how the array of civic, retail, and housing can be balanced and inviting.

During the alternatives phase, we looked at potential areas for street-front improvements, infill or new development, and open space. We also identified "centers" that emerge in this district now, and which should be strengthened through compact development, varied uses, and vibrant textures. These centers or subdistricts are identified as a bohemian downtown (commercial and mixed use, as well as market district), neighborhood, and warehouse.

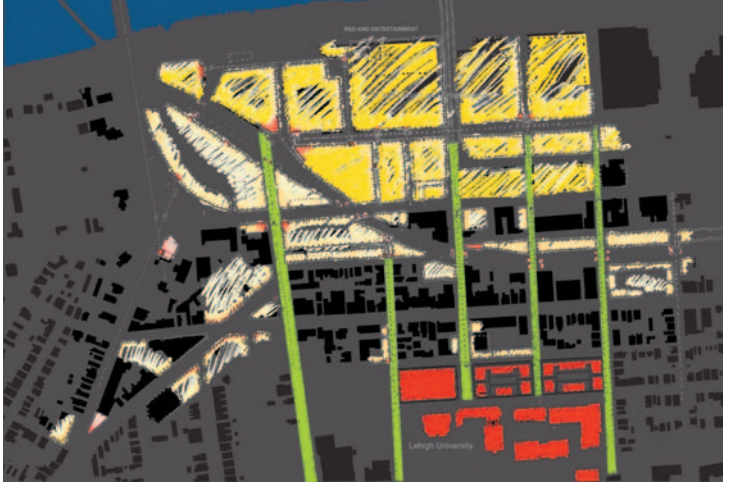
After the alternatives were studied and presented, we assessed their appropriateness by asking ourselves and the community the following:

1. **Are adjacencies appropriate?**
2. **Is there a good mix of residential and retail?**
3. **Do the improvements add beauty to the district?**
4. **Is the pedestrian experience improved?**

These comparison criteria were carried over into the next phase to make certain that proposed interventions were balanced with the nature and needs of the community.



Top to bottom: division of the South Side study area into four districts: R&D, West 3rd Street, Flatiron, and 3rd and 4th Streets; view of existing warehouse buildings in the R&D district; flatiron building from 4th Street, showing vacant parcel on the east side; view of 3rd Street mixed use.



Buildings in light yellow represent potential infill sites; green indicates important north-south roadways between the R&D district and Lehigh University.

Diagram showing street trees to strengthen the north-south pedestrian connections, and a proposed linear park along the rail right-of-way.

Alternative Futures

The next two phases of work on the master plan looked at alternative studies of the district, concentrating on how the district should evolve over time, and what it should become? The team utilized a model, drawings, and images as working tools with the community. At the culmination of this phase, a preferred plan was created along with basic design recommendations.

Four framework principles were developed that spanned all the alternative schemes. These principles are:

Anchors:

The South Side has a long history of two activity centers or magnets at its northern and southern edges. The northern anchor historically was Bethlehem Works, and the plan foresees the warehouse district--at full buildout with R&D and entertainment uses--adding to future plans for Bethlehem Works as a generator of activity. This area needs to be strengthened by introducing research and development and destination entertainment uses. It will then be in a position to complement the concentration of activity that exists now at the southern anchor: Lehigh University. If these anchors are successful, they will provide desire lines through the study area, strengthening the urban connections between housing, retail, and civic uses.

Reconnections:

The team noticed that the secondary north-south streets have been neglected during the past several years, and that they have the potential to knit the existing neighborhoods together. In key areas, we concentrated on housing and retail infill that would strengthen these street edges, and that would frame views to South Mountain.

Open Space:

Currently, the South Side study area has three recognized parks. These spaces are located in "left over" space where they function as undefined remnants and are subsequently underutilized, requiring better maintenance and accessibility to become centerpieces of the district of neighborhood. Creating parks helps neighborhoods have an identifiable center, provides relief from the city, and allows residents to recreate and enjoy parkland without having to travel.

Gateways:

An effective way to create "memory" of a place is to create an entry. The South Side has several front doors, each of which could be improved to create a beautiful first impression for the visitor. Primary entries are the Hill-to-Hill Bridge, the Fahy Bridge, 5-Points, 3rd Street, and 4th Street.

In general, development in this district would be most appropriate if it is concentrated, compact and dense; contains mixed primary uses; is created on small blocks, making it easier to traverse, and creating numerous pedestrian connections; and becomes an effective mix of 'old' and 'new.'

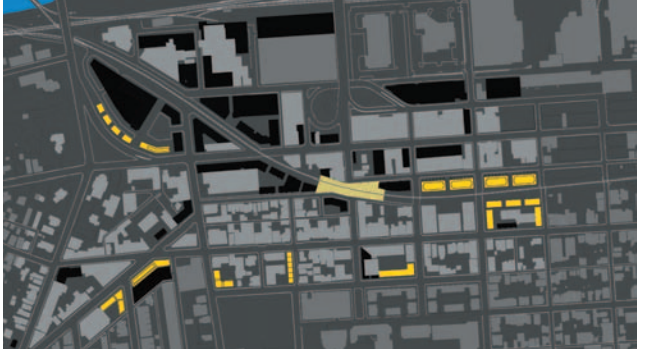
Creating a Plan for the South Side

Master Plan

Proposed master plan for the district showing proposed retail, office, housing and parking sited to reflect the site's urban character (red), and proposed street trees and parks (green)

After exploring several alternative strategies with the City and community, we composed a preferred plan for the South Side. This plan explores the potential location for new commercial and residential development, places for parks, connections between districts that could be strengthened, and street and sidewalk improvements. Additionally, it recommends strategies that maintain its historic and neighborhood character; retain existing building assets; reinforce districts that continue to have unique identities, but which also are connected to each other. The plan proposes simple improvements that can be done quickly to improve safety and image.

OFFICE SPACE



RESIDENTIAL

OFFICE SPACE:

New office space is primarily distributed throughout the first, second and third floors over retail, and in the R& D district. Existing warehouses and empty parcels are well-suited for large building footprints that are needed for contemporary office space and supporting parking structures.

RESIDENTIAL:

Major districts for new residential developments are along the improved Triangle Park, the proposed Norfolk Rail park, throughout the 3rd and 4th Street area as infill housing. By distributing new residential throughout the district, the area will take on a more 24-hour life, thereby having a better perception of safety.

COMMERCIAL FIRST FLOOR:

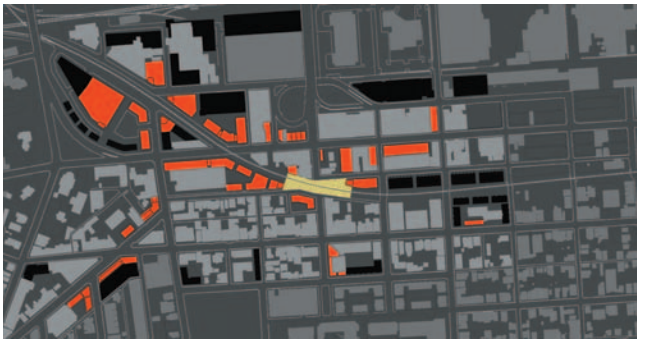
New office buildings and residential buildings along major streets should have commercial occupying the street and second levels. This improves pedestrian vitality of the neighborhood and improves the existing retail district.

PARKING STRUCTURES:

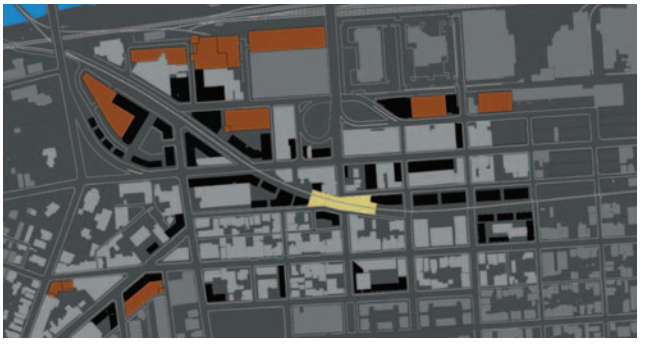
Future parking structures are mainly in new R&D area. New residential buildings should have parking in their basement levels. Some existing large-bay structures could be proposed for structured parking.

OPEN SPACE:

The proposed Norfolk Rail Park functions as green spine connecting the 3rd and 4th Streets retail district with the R&D district. It becomes an excellent amenity for the surrounding residential and community development. A new multifunctional plaza and farmers market occurs at the crossroads of the proposed park and New Street.

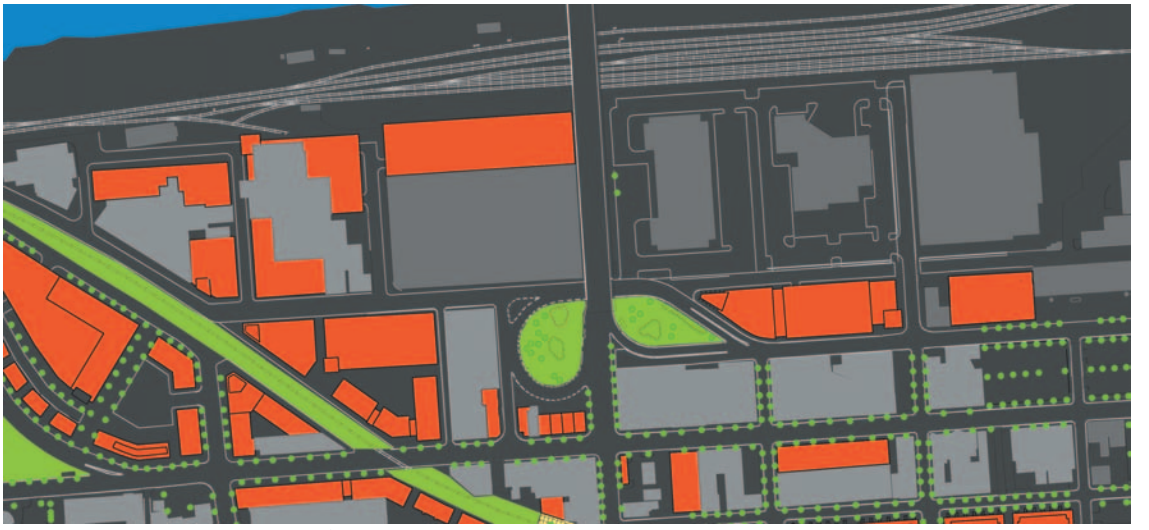


COMMERCIAL FIRST FLOOR

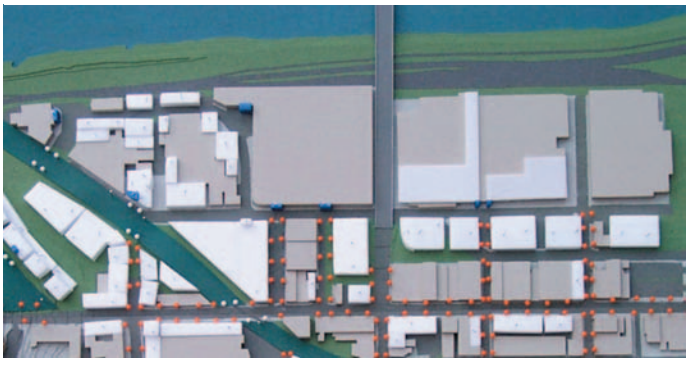


PARKING STRUCTURES

OPEN SPACE



The R&D district, showing proposed building infill and park space.



Existing character of the R&D district, below, with a model of proposed buildings in this district, above.

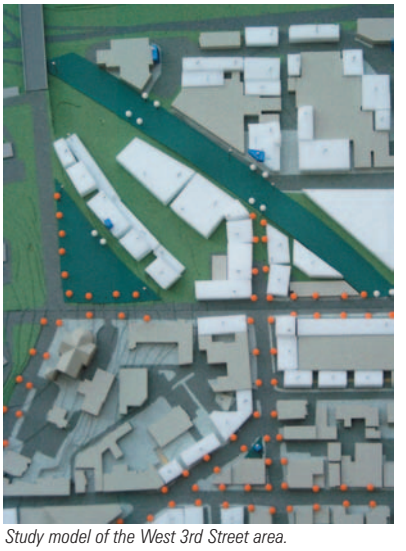
District Definitions and Improvements

Utilizing the district boundaries that had been identified in the alternatives phase, we recommended the following improvements to the South Side.

R&D/Entertainment:

Utilizing existing warehouse buildings, and creating infill for:

- R&D,
- Theater,
- Office space, and,
- Structured parking, some of which can be accommodated in the large bays of existing buildings.



Study model of the West 3rd Street area.

Looking west with a view of mixed use housing on the south side of 3rd street, and under-utilized parcels along the north side.

West 3rd Street:

Now existing as largely empty parcels, our emphasis here is on:

- Infill, bringing building fronts to the street,
- Creating a good pedestrian environment, and,
- Introducing an urban model for a development.

Housing along west 3rd Street, with Triangle park in the foreground and South Mountain in the background. This corner forms a key gateway to the South Side.

Top: plan and model for the Flatiron neighborhood, showing urban infill on parking lot sites on Broadway and Wyandotte streets. Above: image of the historic townhouses on Wyandotte. This urban character should be preserved.

Flatiron Neighborhood:

The goals for this district are to use the large parking areas as canvasses for:

- Mixed-use development with a large housing component,
- Community retail, and,
- Managed and phased parking.

3rd & 4th Street Corridors:

For these two east-west corridors, the study recommends a retail use/market study to examine community needs, and:

- Continuing the tradition of small infill projects that complete the street edge,
- Creating and defining major district gateways,
- Investing in policies that would created a balance of civic, social, and retail use,
- Forming an edge along the parkland that is proposed for the abandoned Norfolk Rail Line, and,
- Creating a better pedestrian environment along the sidewalks (lighting, benches, trash receptacles, and paving) and at street crossings.

Clockwise from top: plan showing mixed use infill along the proposed rail corridor park and along 3rd and 4th streets, improved pedestrian crossings, and street trees; model of the 3rd and 4th street district looking east; view of 3rd Street storefronts.

View of Wyandotte Street looking south.

Plan Principles

The final plan that emerged addressed four principles to:

- Strengthen the northern and southern anchors of the study area by creating a work and entertainment destination in the warehouse district;
- Reconnect the secondary streets with the primary streets using building infill, and by giving these streets multiple destinations: central green space, river, mountain;
- Create useable, programmable, open space that is of a scale that can serve neighborhood recreation needs, knits the study area from east to west, provides the stage for a farmers market and housing infill, and creates a green gateway for those who enter the site;
- Improve gateways by introducing a Square south of the Fahy Bridge, a defined open space and infill adjacent to the Hill-to-Hill Bridge, reclamation of the historic buildings in the 5-Points area, and improved streets and pedestrian connections along 3rd, 4th, and Morton Streets.

The preceding master plan diagram shows the location of infill buildings, squares, and open space that continue to take their cues from the existing fabric and historic significance of the South Side. The proposed plan shows additional program of 1.3 million square feet plus structured parking, phased over twenty to thirty years. Approximate proposed development by district is as follows:

West 3rd Street District

Residential	**24,892 (20 units)**
Commercial	**159,985**
Retail	**30,000**
Net new parking	**190**

R & D District

Commercial	**446,900**
Net new parking	**3,290**

3rd and 4th Street District

Residential	**292,181 (225 units)**
Commercial	**214,980**
Net new parking	**1,537**

Flatiron District

Residential	**93,608 (70 units)**
Commercial	**60,177**
Net new parking	**366**

Transportation

As a part of the master plan study, the transportation firm of Boles, Smyth assessed the traffic and transportation needs of the area. Our work with Boles recognized that the site is an urban area with extensive pedestrian activity, and that pedestrian crossings were critical to the vitality of this district. As redevelopment of the South Side intensifies, improved traffic, expanded parking, enhanced pedestrian activity and greater transit service will be essential to accommodate increased activity.

Roadway improvements are proposed for the west 3rd Street/Hill-to-Hill bridge intersection, and to the 3rd Street/Fahy Bridge intersection. It is proposed that the primary approach to the Bethlehem Works site would be from the east, along 1-78, thereby relieving some traffic along the 3rd and 4th Street corridors.

The study also recommends the following first-phase improvements which are keyed in to the adjacent map:

1. **A more traffic-responsive signal operations system with enhanced capacity along the Wyandotte Street (PA 378) corridor, including the 3rd/Brodhead intersection.**

2. **Expanded vehicular access to the R&D/Entertainment District along 2nd Street, including direct access to the Fahy Bridge on-ramp from Second Street and the development of direct access to Brodhead Avenue by extending it north.**

3. **A more direct pedestrian connection to the Fahy Bridge from New Street to overcome the current unsafe practice where people walk in the roadway. This improves the south Side's pedestrian linkage to the City Center and to Sand Island Park.**

4. **A more direct pedestrian connection to 2nd Street and the expanding R&D/Entertainment District from New Street.**

5. **Future study of pedestrian access across PA 378 from the Brighton Street area.**

Proposed circulation improvements for the study district, keyed to descriptions below.

6. **Improved pedestrian attraction of the cross streets and more user-friendly access between the rail corridor parking and the 3rd Street and 4th Street retail areas. Long-term, the plan proposes new housing on existing parking sites.**

7. **Greater transit service and usage to provide viable alternatives to auto travel made possible by increasing the density in the district and adding residential units.**

Parking

To determine the number of total parking spaces needed, we used a ratio of 1-1.5 parking spaces for every 1,000 gsf of proposed buildings, with a higher ratio of 4-6 spaces per 1,000 gsf for proposed grocery and other medium-sized community retail. In the future, the plan proposes infilling structured parking near the flat-iron building (between Broadway, West 4th Street, and Wyandotte), and the potential for structured parking behind the proposed mixed-use residential on the south side of Broadway. The estimated number of additional parking spaces is 5,350, with 3,300 spaces located in the R&D district.

View of the corner of New and 4th Streets. Consistent street tree planting, active storefronts, and parallel parking helps to create a good environment for pedestrians.

Implementation

The goal of this master plan was to create realistic, achievable projects that could be phased over time as grant monies become available. To realize the plan, City, State, merchant organizations, and private investment will be required. To date, the City has received a grant to begin upgrading some of the South Side's primary streets, including lighting, pedestrian crossings, and street trees.

All projects that are recommended in the master plan support the community's vision for the South Side, including the creation of tax incentives for home ownership; density bonuses for appropriate design and housing inclusion; cleaner and safer streets; usable parks; and viable retail and destination retail. Realistic funding opportunities and a stable funding timeline for public improvements must be introduced, and the following steps are required:

1. **Create urban design guidelines for future development,**

2. **Draft a funding timeline for public improvements,**

3. **Concentrate on positive policy issues: linkage fees, incentives, bonuses, etc.,**

4. **Embrace and act on good urban policies:**

   - **Cleanliness, safety, sanitation, zoning, urban design guidelines, setback guidelines, density guidelines and bonus opportunities, building code issues,**

   - **Civic infrastructure improvements such as lighting, crosswalks, street trees, wayfinding, parking,**

   - **Private development investment in infill buildings and structured parking.**

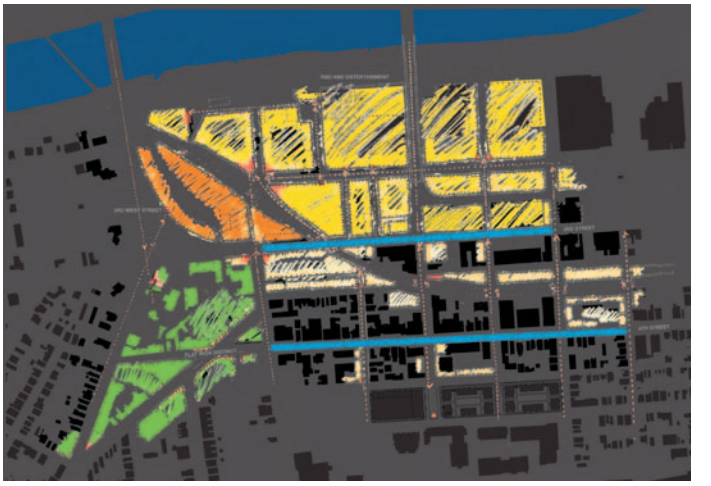
The accompanying charts outline three categories of recommended improvements: Public, Repair/Infill, and Major District. The tables also identify the primary funding sources needed to champion these improvements.

Public Improvements

Lighting is a priority within the South Side to increase pedestrian safety and to improve aesthetics of the district. The city should designate a sample area—preferably New Street as a connector between Lehigh and the remainder of the South Side—as a sample of character improvements.

Public signage should be improved throughout the district to mark public parking, to announce public areas, and to welcome visitors to the district. Funding and installation of parking and directional signage should be initiated within the next 18-24 months.

Public Improvements	Funding Source
Lighting	City
Public Signage	City
Pedestrian Walkways/ Crosswalks	City
Connector Streets	City
Maintenance	City and Merchants



Division of the South Side into four districts: R&D, West 3rd Street, Flatiron, and 3rd and 4th Streets.

Pedestrian walkways should be improved at crosswalks, with paving changes or boldly-painted crosswalks, and pedestrian signalization. In addition, the following additions should be made to the district within the next 18-24 months: (a) installation of at-grade sidewalks connecting 3rd Street to the Fahy Bridge; (b) completion of the pedestrian crossing at Wyandotte Street between Brighton and Third Streets; and, (c) improved sidewalks on either side of the Fahy Bridge leading to the proposed R&D district.

Connector streets between Morton and 2nd Street should be upgraded to improve the perception of safety in these areas, improve aesthetics, and encourage better use of underutilized parcels. Public improvements should be initiated on these connector streets moving eastward from New Street.

Maintenance of existing parks and streets should be continued throughout the study area. Since the South Side has limited green-space, it should be maintained for maximum use and beauty. New greenspace should be designed to have simplicity in detail, to endure and limit maintenance, and to be bold in a scale that is appropriate to the district.

Repair/Infill Improvements

Mechanic Street currently is poorly maintained and underutilized. The city should consider public improvements to upgrade pedestrian ways, parking lots, and adjoining buildings, particularly if the Norfolk Rail corridor is abandoned in the future and can become a regional park.

West 3rd Street is the gateway to the district from the Hill-to-Hill bridge, and should be improved with sensitive development that forms the transition from the residential neighborhoods to the R&D district. Building infill here could include housing, grocery market, or office space.

5-Points is the area that suffers from intense vehicular traffic, difficult pedestrian crossings, and the mix of both historic townhouse buildings and less sensitive development. This area would benefit from investing in historic building renovation, urban vs. suburban development and massing, and improved pedestrian connections.

Repair/Infill Improvements	Funding Source
Mechanic Street	**Private**
West 3rd Street	**Private**
5-Points	**Private**

Major District Improvements

Norfolk rail line abandonment would create the potential for a regional open space destination adjacent to the main retail areas of the South Side. While no structures could be built on the land, it would provide an exceptional location for passive recreation, farmers market, and pathways that could connect to other parts of the city.

R&D district improvements would strengthen this northern anchor of the South Side and renovate historic landmarks of the area, including the Lehigh River Port project. The reintroduction of streets is essential to connect this district—now seen as isolated—to the fabric of the South Side. New buildings should be constructed up to the sidewalk line, and parking should be carefully screened.

Major District Improvements	Funding Source
Rail Line	**City and Private**
R & D District	**Private**

Policy

Code enforcement related to litter, property maintenance, and general issues should be reviewed, especially since the South Side has a higher than average number of rental units and absentee landlords. The City's current code enforcement ordinances may not need to be modified, but those ordinances must be enforced on a systematic basis with penalties and incentives to promote the objectives of the plan. The City should consider amending its residential rehabilitation or loan programs to include rental properties.

Garbage collection on the South Side should be improved by mandating uniform garbage pick-up days. This change in policy would improve the collection of trash, reduce litter, and decrease the misuse of public trash receptacles.

Conservation district design guidelines should be established for the more architecturally significant buildings. The guidelines also should ensure that other buildings are compatible with these architecturally significant structures. The City should adopt a policy where development that meets the objectives and criteria of this ordinance can be afforded development incentives not available to other development.

Public gathering areas should be designated for the South Side, user-friendly and safe. Public outdoor activities such as street fairs or farmers markets should be encouraged and concentrated at the intersections of New, Mechanic, and Graham Streets.

Redevelop the transition area that lies between 3rd Street and the River as a priority economic development area. Of immediate priority is the 2nd Street grade crossing which is necessary for improved access to proposed development projects.

Building and fire codes should be researched, drawing on provisions utilized by other municipalities, state building codes, and the impact that the newly-adopted Pennsylvania State-wide Building Code might have on reuse or change of use in older buildings. The City must encourage reuse of vacant or underutilized buildings in the South Side as street vibrancy is important.

Front and rear façade improvements for buildings have now been addressed by a city policy that provides incentives for improvement to rear of buildings in designated areas were there could be significant impact.

Policy/Code Issues	Regulatory Entity
Code Enforcement	**City**
Garbage Collection	**City**
Conservation District Design Guidelines	**City**
Public Gathering Area	**City**
Redevelop Transition Area	**City**
Building and Fire Codes	**City**
Façade Improvements for Rear of Buildings	**City**
Retail to Non-Profit Balance	**City**
Development adjacent to Lehigh University	**City**

Retail to non-profit balance should be coordinated through the City and merchants of the primary streets: 3rd, 4th, New, Broadway, Brodhead, Wyandotte, and Morton. Currently, there are larger concentrations of non-profit businesses in some areas.

Development adjacent to Lehigh University should be coordinated with the University's master plan, especially current development proposed at Morton and New Streets, and potential development at Broadway and West 4th Streets. In these new developments, buildings should frame the street, parking should be buffered and hidden where possible, and pedestrian lighting and street trees should be improved.

Summary

Character of neighborhood east of Broadway.

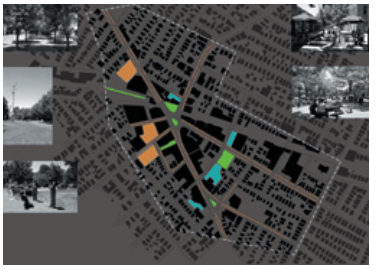
The South Side's strong assets of community alliances, commitment to the historic significance of their districts, strong institutional presence of Lehigh University, and future Bethlehem Steel development, and the rich array of historic, flexible building space for future retail, R&D and entertainment provide a powerful combination for a promising future of this area.

Improvements through a combination of city, private, and merchant dollars, can result in permanent residents that continue to be good stewards of the streets and neighborhoods. The continual investment in the historic character of mixed use and housing will further establish a strong neighborhood base for this area.

Immediate changes, combined with incremental opportunity and coordinated effort, can be realized. These first steps must be correct, thoughtful, inclusive, and must focus on a series of small-scale improvements that have the power to improve the image, livability and unique character of this district. The use of these physical assets, combined with coordinated efforts and dollars, can result in tangible success.

Appendix

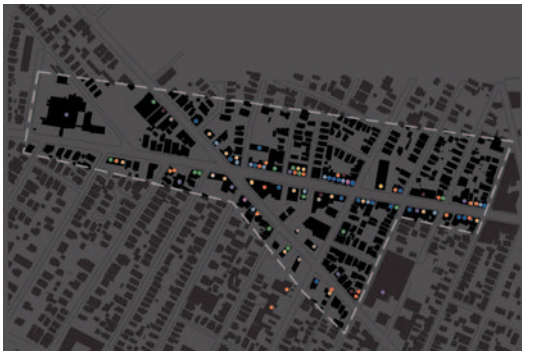
Peer Neighborhoods

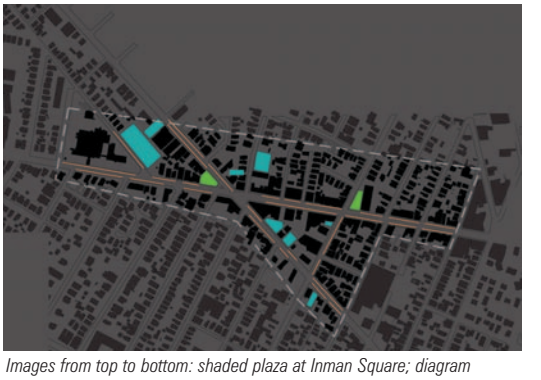


Images from top to bottom: main gathering area at Davis Square; diagram showing the distribution of building uses throughout Davis Square; diagram showing open space (in green) and parking (in blue and orange).

DAVIS SQUARE

This district is adjacent to Tufts University on the outskirts of Boston, and caters to the academic community at large. The district is comparable in size to the South Side, comprising approximately 80 acres. Of the two intersecting streets, one is primarily neighborhood retail and service-oriented, while the other is predominantly entertainment and restaurants. Civic buildings are dispersed throughout the district. Open space occurs at strategic points within the district: adjacent to primary activity centers, as community playgrounds, or augmenting primary pedestrian connections. This district has street parking on all major streets, permit and meters. Large parking lots and structured parking are located behind large buildings, screened from the roadways. Because of the large amount of public parking, and public transportation that runs along both streets, few private lots are required.





Images from top to bottom: shaded plaza at Inman Square; diagram showing the distribution of building uses throughout Inman Square; diagram showing open space (in green) and parking (in blue and orange).

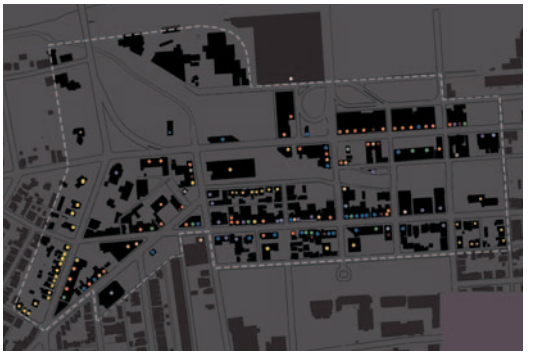
INMAN SQUARE

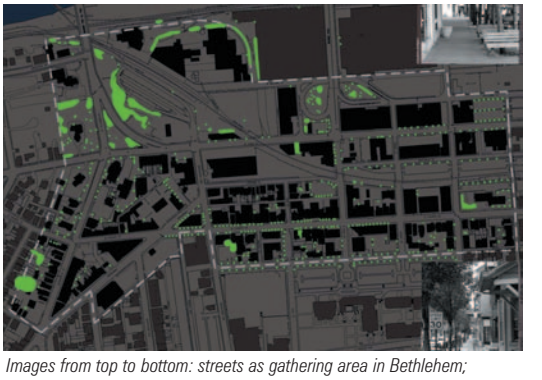
Inman Square is located between Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge, Massachusetts, serving both communities and operating as a secondary town center. This 40-acre district is substantially smaller than the other districts studied, but it too is located at the convergence of primary streets. One of these streets has the majority of restaurants, coffee shops and convenience stores, while the other contains banks, offices, and other specialty services. A city hospital is located on the western edge of this district. Open space in this district is concentrated in two locations: a corner park, highly visible, well-shaded, and at the primary crossroads of the two streets. The second is a large green space adjacent to a multi-storey housing building. Parking is concentrated near major business blocks, and on-street metered parking is available along both streets, with permit parking along side streets. Primary bus lines run on each of the two streets.

Images from top to bottom: gateway at Union Square; diagram showing the distribution of building uses throughout Union Square; diagram showing open space (in green) and parking (in blue and orange).

UNION SQUARE

union Square is a diverse, ethnic neighborhood comprised of 100 acres, located in Somerville, Massachusetts. Retail is less concentrated in a center, rather, aligned on one major street and accentuating the primary intersection. Municipal uses are dispersed throughout the district. The primary roadway that runs through the Square connects to a major regional highway. Open space in this district is concentrated at the crossroads, where a road was closed to serve this purpose. In addition, several small green spaces are located throughout the neighborhood which enhance primary pedestrian intersections. While there are some larger lots, most visitors use on-street parking: metered and permit.





Images from top to bottom: streets as gathering area in Bethlehem; diagram showing the distribution of building uses throughout the study area in Bethlehem; diagram showing open space (in green) and parking (in blue and orange).

BETHLEHEM

The primary retail activity in the study area occurs along 3rd, 4th and New Streets. The abundance of municipal offices along the west end of 4th Street often make this retail area less coherent and vibrant. Currently, there is no strategic distribution of open space in this district, and few social gathering places. Street trees are scattered, with the only implemented streetscape along 4th Street. Existing open parcels are private and mainly used as surface parking.

Buildings

- Neighborhood
- Office
- Residential
- Service
- Goods
- Vacant
- Auto
- Municipal
- Entertainment
- Foods
- Restaurant
- Other

Open Space & Parking

- Private Parking
- Municipal/On Street
- Park/Square

Meetings

During the master planning process, Sasaki and the City of Bethlehem held three public meetings. These discussions were well attended, and centered around each phase of work. Powerpoint presentations, drawings, images, and a large-scale model were used to convey recommended improvements for the district.

In the meeting that centered around opportunities and constraints, the primary outcomes included: perceived pedestrian safety, street lighting, appropriate storefront mix, and maintenance of sidewalks, parking areas, and parks.

During meeting two, alternative futures, the community was interested in fostering new development to form street edge, mixed use, linear greenspace along the rail right-of-way, and neighborhood retail.

During meeting three, strategies for implementation, retaining a pedestrian neighborhood, and providing neighborhood-scale retail were of primary concern to the neighbors.

View of the South Side from the Hill-to-Hill Bridge.

Resources Consulted

Signage of the Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor
South Bethlehem Historic Conservation Commission District Map and Ordinance
Architectural Design Standards: South Bethlehem Commercial District
Bethlehem Historic District Design Guidelines
1990 Census Data
Zoning map
Bethlehem Works Demographic Analysis and Merchandising Concepts
Zoning ordinance
Bethlehem Works Master Plan Report
South Side '76 Plan
Demographic and Income Forecast
Bethlehem Vision Comprehensive Plan
Subdivision and Development Ordinance of the City of Bethlehem
Bethlehem Works Vision Statement and Design and Construction Guidelines
Transportation Needs Overview for Bethlehem Works
LANTA transportation maps
Lehigh University Campus and Facilities Development Plan
Downtown Special Services District guidelines
City-generated data for the South Side study area:

- Rental housing locations
- Community policing boundaries
- Best-organized crime-watch neighborhoods
- Highest concentration of Lehigh students
- Highest areas of absentee landlords

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